



September 29, 2006

The Honorable Samuel W. Bodman
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Secretary Bodman,

As the Fernald Citizens Advisory Board (FCAB) completes 13 years of service to the U.S. Department of Energy, we wish to congratulate DOE on nearing closure and restoration of the Fernald site. We are proud to have been a key part of the partnership in this success story along with DOE's contractors and the Ohio and U.S. EPAs.

In 1999, the FCAB began to shift its focus from cleanup to the long-term stewardship of the Fernald site. Now that all of the major physical components of cleanup are virtually complete, stewardship has fully become the most important aspect of Fernald for the community.

While much has been achieved, we wish to reiterate several of our major recommendations on long-term stewardship issues that will remain critical to the long-term success of Fernald, and/or have yet to be brought to completion. As such, while these recommendations are officially presented to the attention of Environmental Management in accordance with our charter, we respectfully ask that DOE formally present them to Legacy Management on our behalf so that they will get the attention that they require.

Community-Based Stewardship

In our 2002 report, *Telling the Story of Fernald*, the FCAB coined the term Community-Based Stewardship to describe the active involvement of those living and working near a site in its ongoing management. The success of Fernald will depend on well-informed and aware community members—now and in the future—who have immediate access to meaningful, relevant, up-to-date, and user-friendly information. We recommend that the concepts proposed in our report remain central to how the Fernald site is managed and how the public is engaged into the future. In particular, we recommend that DOE encourage and support the development of the Fernald Community Alliance (FCA) and any similar or successor organizations, and engage these organizations directly in the development and implementation of programs and activities that will make Fernald an integral part of the local community.

Multi-Use Education Center

The establishment and management of a MUEF on the Fernald site is the cornerstone of the Fernald community's vision for the future of Fernald. We are supportive and excited about the possibilities presented by the draft designs of the University of Cincinnati. We strongly recommend that DOE follow through on its commitment to create this facility and engage the local public in its development and use. However, the building itself is nothing without a strong connection to educational programs on and related to the Fernald site. We also recommend that DOE support and expand upon the many existing educational programs and relationships with local educators.

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Local Preservation and Access to Artifacts

The FCAB has taken a high level of interest in how artifacts and records are maintained. We are pleased with the collection of artifacts that have been collected and support that they be maintained at the MUEF. There are still a number of photographs and negatives that will not be maintained by the DOE or preserved as records. We strongly recommend that these be provided to the Fernald Community Alliance for storage and curation.

Natural Resources Damages Lawsuit

Resolution of the NRD lawsuit has been a priority of the FCAB for many years. We continue to support a successful resolution of the lawsuit that provides direction and support to maintaining stewardship of site natural resources and associated public education and access.

Groundwater Remediation, Monitoring, and Communication

As DOE completes remediation of the Great Miami Aquifer, the community looks forward to being able to understand and monitor progress through regular briefings and the web site. We recommend that DOE continue to stay in close contact with FCA and other community organizations to ensure that public knowledge and awareness stays high.

Construction of Trails

One disappointment to the FCAB has been the lack of design and implementation of a system of trails in conjunction with site restoration. The FCAB and the local community included trails as a central component of the long-term vision for the site and have left behind extensive recommendations with regard to how trails should be constructed and maintained. We strongly recommend that trails be constructed at the Fernald site as soon as possible (before restoration growth makes the job more difficult and expensive) and that DOE refer to these previous recommendations in trail construction, maintenance, and use.

Native American Artifacts and Reinterments

The FCAB recognizes that DOE has made numerous good faith efforts over the years to provide a resting place for many Native American remains and ensure the proper handling of artifacts. Unfortunately, these efforts have not resulted in permanent solutions or identified a way that the Fernald site could play a constructive role. We recommend that DOE remain open to future inquiries and opportunities to support Ohio's Native American communities in searching for these answers.

Communicating the Success Factors that Made Fernald Work

Fernald's success was only possible because of the hard work of many people and the long-term partnership of government and citizens in making and implementing difficult choices. We strongly recommend that DOE not forget the collaborative lessons of Fernald and use them to build collaborative decision-making processes and relationships at other facilities in the future.

All members of the FCAB want to express our thanks for the opportunity to serve this community and our country in this important work and wish DOE continued success in managing this integral new component of our community.

Sincerely,



James C. Bierer
Chair



Lisa Crawford
Vice-Chair



Joyce Bentle



M. Kathryn Brown



Stephen P. Depoe



Pamela Dunn



Gene Jablanowski



Robert Tabor



Gene Willeke



Edwa Yocum

cc:

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